



Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Hearing

Sudan: Human Rights and Sanctions

April 4, 2017

1:30 – 3:00 PM

2255 Rayburn House Office Building

Opening Remarks as prepared for delivery

Good afternoon and welcome to the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission's hearing on the status of human rights and sanctions in Sudan.

I would like to thank our witnesses for coming here today to share their expertise with us.

2017 has already proven to be an important year for United States' foreign policy concerning Sudan. Since 1993 the United States has designated Sudan as a state sponsor of international terrorism, and has imposed a trade embargo since 1997. For the first time in decades, sanctions regulations are changing.

Sanctions against Sudan were justified on the basis of the Sudanese government's egregious human rights violations, including genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, especially in Darfur, but also in the states of South Kordofan (Kord-o-fan) and Blue Nile, which are known as the Two Areas.

In January, the Obama administration issued a General License to amend Sudanese sanctions regulations, and a new Executive Order revoking sanctions provisions in two of the three past Executive Orders if they sustain positive actions taken since July 2016.

These positive actions are categorized in five key areas:

- Rebuilding counterterrorism cooperation
- Countering the threat of the Lord's Resistance Army
- Ending "negative involvement" in South Sudan's conflict
- Sustaining a unilateral cessation of hostilities in Darfur and the Two Areas, and
- Improving humanitarian access throughout Sudan.

This easing of sanctions allows for a six-month trial period so the U.S. can determine whether the lifting of sanctions should become permanent. This has temporarily lifted the 20-year trade embargo and unblocked over \$30 million in government assets.

The timeliness of this hearing is that we are now halfway through this trial period. Sanctions relief will become permanent on July 12 if it is reported that positive actions have been sustained.

What is the measure of Sudan's progress towards improvements on its human rights record since the easing of sanctions?

These recent changes to longstanding U.S. sanctions on Sudan raise questions for Congress as Members consider U.S. policy toward the country and its government. For more than three decades, Congress has played an active role, alongside successive administrations, in shaping that policy.

Our concern is broadly focused on the humanitarian suffering caused by Sudan's myriad conflicts, human rights abuses, and the government's historic relationship with terrorist groups.

I look forward to hearing from our panel today on how United States policy can best serve those in Sudan who are still suffering under human rights abuses. Thank you.